

Living Streets Aotearoa



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Ahead of tomorrow's (Monday 9/3/2020) release of the Accessible Streets package, Living Streets Aotearoa and the Footpaths for Feet Coalition(1) is calling on the government to adopt the <https://www.itf-oecd.org/10-recommendations-safe-micromobility>(2), which released its report(3) on e-scooters and other micro-vehicles last week.

The three most significant recommendations in the current context of rapidly growing micro-mobility options were that:

- protected space should be allocated for e-scooters and other micro-mobility devices or where micromobility devices and motor vehicles share road space the speed limits should be lowered to 30km/h. The focus should remain on the danger that motor vehicles pose other road users
- micromobility devices capable of only low speeds should be regulated as bicycles while those capable of higher speeds should be regulated as mopeds
- eliminate incentives for users of rental micromobility device to speed such as by requiring charging by distance rather than time.

The government has a golden opportunity to promote the safe integration of micromobility devices such as e-scooters into our transport system by adopting these recommendations. The question is whether it has the foresight and good sense to do so or whether it will sacrifice the safety, and perception of safety, of pedestrians when it reveals its Accessible Streets package tomorrow.

'Footpaths4Feet has repeatedly expressed its concern to the government about the negative effects on pedestrians and disabled people of having e-scooters and other vehicles on footpaths. We hope it has taken heed and won't be suggesting anything stupid in this package', says Footpaths4feet convenor Dr Chris Teo-Sherrell.

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Notes:

1) Footpaths4Feet is a coalition of 13 member organisations, including Living Streets Aotearoa, Grey Power, Disabled Persons Assembly, CCS Disability Action, Alzheimers NZ, Blind and Low Vision NZ, Deaf Action NZ, Association of Blind Citizens NZ, Health Action Trust, Age Concern,

Dunedin Pedestrian Network, Retina NZ, Visual Impairment Charitable Trust Aotearoa NZ.

2) The International Transport Forum at the OECD is an intergovernmental organisation with 60 member countries. It acts as a think tank for transport policy and organises the Annual Summit of transport ministers. ITF is the only global body that covers all transport modes. The ITF is administratively integrated with the OECD, yet politically autonomous. NZ is a member.

3) The “Safe Micromobility” study was carried out in the context of a project initiated and funded by the ITF Corporate Partnership Board (CPB). CPB projects are designed to enrich policy discussion with a business perspective. Led by the ITF, work is carried out in working groups consisting of CPB member companies, external experts and ITF researchers. The CPB member companies involved in this project were Bird, Bosch, Grin, Incheon Airport, Kapsch TrafficCom AG, Michelin, PTV Group, Toyota and Uber. https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/docs/safe-micromobility_1.pdf

The report offers ten recommendations for policy makers, city planners, operators and manufacturers:

1. Allocate protected space for micromobility

Create a protected and connected network for micromobility. This can be done by calming traffic or by creating dedicated spaces. Micro-vehicles should be banned from sidewalks or subject to a low, enforced speed limit.

2. To make micromobility safe, focus on motor vehicles

The novelty of e-scooters should not distract from addressing the risk motor vehicles pose for all other road users. Where vulnerable road users share space with motor vehicles, speed limits should be 30 km/h or less.

3. Regulate low-speed micro-vehicles as bicycles

Micromobility can make urban travel more sustainable. To prevent over-regulation, low-speed micro-vehicles such as e-scooters and e-bikes should be treated as bicycles. Faster micro-vehicles should be regulated as mopeds.

4. Collect data on micro-vehicle trips and crashes

Little is known about micro-vehicles' safety performance. Police and hospitals should collect accurate crash data. Road safety agencies should collect trip data via operators, travel surveys and on-street observation. The statistical codification of vehicle types must be updated and harmonised.

5. Proactively manage the safety performance of street networks

Many shared micro-vehicles possess motion sensors and GPS. These can yield useful data on potholes, falls and near crashes. Authorities and operators should collaborate to use them for monitoring and maintenance.

6. Include micromobility in training for road users

Training for car, bus and truck drivers to avoid crashes with micro-vehicle riders should be mandatory. Cycle training should be part of the school curriculum. Training programmes should be regularly evaluated and revised.

7. Tackle drunk driving and speeding across all vehicle types

Governments should define and enforce limits on speed, alcohol and drug use among all traffic participants. This includes motor vehicle drivers and micromobility users.

8. Eliminate incentives for micromobility riders to speed

Operators of shared micromobility fleets should ensure their pricing mechanisms do not encourage riders to take risks. By-the-minute rental can be an incentive to speed or to ignore traffic rules.

9. Improve micro-vehicle design

Manufacturers should enhance stability and road grip. Solutions could be found in pneumatic tyres, larger wheel size and frame geometry. Indicator lights could be made mandatory and brake cables better protected.

10. Reduce wider risks associated with shared micromobility operations

The use of vans for re-positioning or re-charging micro-vehicles should be minimised, as they impose additional risks on all road users. Cities should allocate parking space for micro-vehicles close to bays for support vans.